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INDIA'S JOB MARKET SHOWS RELIEF AS UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FALLS

A government survey on Monday said the unemployment rate dipped to 5.2 per cent in July, down from 5.6 per cent in June

MARGINAL RISE IN URBAN YOUTH JOBLESSNESS

The Periodic Labour Force Survey released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said the pace of joblessness among men stayed slightly higher at 5.3 per cent compared to that of women at 5.1 per cent. The rate of unemployment in urban areas for 15-29 age group saw a marginal increase to 19 per cent in July from 18.8 per cent June | P13

LABOUR PARTICIPATION RATE SEES A SPIKE

- The Labour Force Participation Rate among persons of all age groups rose to 41.4 per cent in July 2025 as compared to 41 per cent in June
- In rural areas, the Labour Force Participation Rate of all age groups was 42 per cent, as against 41.5 per cent in the preceding month. In urban areas, it was 40.1 per cent in July, up from 39.8 per cent in June

89,505

HOUSEHOLDS WERE COVERED BY THE PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

INDIA parties mull impeaching CEC

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

AS the face–off between the Election Commission Of India (ECI) and the Opposition intensifies over allegations of 'vote theft' and poll rigging, the INDIA bloc on Monday said it is mulling an impeachment motion against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

The move comes a day after the CEC asked Rahul Gandhi, leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, to either file an affidavit substantiating his vote theft allegations or apologise. The proposal for an impeachment motion was discussed at the INDIA bloc meeting on Monday morning.

Several Opposition leaders met in the chamber of Mallikarjun Kharge, leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, and held discussions on how the CEC on Sunday addressed a press conference without answering any of the questions raised by them, according to a leader who attended the meeting.

The Opposition also decided not to cooperate with the government on the special discussion on the impact of astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla's space mission. The Lok Sabha is having a two-day special discussion on the issues.

Some opposition MPs said they feel this fight has to be taken forward and suggested an impeachment motion against the CEC, sources said.

Addressing a joint press conference on Monday, representatives of eight opposition parties including Congress, TMC, SP, DMK and RJD hit out at the CEC, alleging that instead of responding to questions raised by them, he chose to attack them at his presser on Sunday. TMC's Mahua Moitra said the Lok Sabha should be dissolved as the last elections were held on "faulty" voter list.

When the Lok Sabha met at 11 am on Monday, opposition MPs, including those from the Congress, were on their feet, raising slogans and showing placards with demand for discussion on the Special Intensive Revision in Bihar. Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House following the bedlam.

We're not afraid of poll panel's threat: Rahul

Patna: A day after chief election commissioner asked Rahul Gandhi to submit an affidavit on his vote theft slur or apologise in a week, the Congress leader on Monday said he was not afraid of such threats | P9

BJP throws a dare at opposition parties

New Delhi: BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra on Monday dared INDIA bloc parties to dissolve state assemblies where they are in power if they doubt the Election Commission's fairness.

Ghataprabha river at Godchinmalki near Gokak is in full spate on Monday

IMD issues red alert for rain in Konkan, South

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday issued a 'red alert' for extremely heavy rain in the next 24 hours in central and Southern India along with the Western Ghats. There is a high possibility of extremely heavy rainfall over coastal Andhra Pradesh, southern Chhattisgarh, southern Odisha, Telangana, south-interior Karnataka, the Konkan region (including Mumbai), Goa, Western Ghats in Madhya Maharashtra and coastal Karnataka and Gujarat over the next two days.

Flood alert in several parts of Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Belagavi/Mandya/Gadag

A FLOOD alert was sounded in several parts of the state as water levels in dams and rivers increased drastically due to continuous rain over the last few days.

Several bridges in Belagavi district were submerged, while people in many villages in the Malaprabha basin of Gadag district were being shifted to safer places. The district administration in Mandya advised farmers not to carry out agricultural activities in the river basin or to allow livestock near the riverbanks.

In Belagavi district, bridges and roads were inundated, cutting off link to several villages. Chikkodi taluk was among the worst-hit as Maharashtra increased outflows from its reservoirs, causing a flood-like situation in the Krishna river. In the last two days, at least eight bridges have submerged, and 16 flood-prone villages have lost road connectivity.

As of Tuesday, the inflow into the Krishna river in Belagavi was recorded at 67,000 cusecs, while the Ghataprabha river at Gokak reported inflows of 38,000 cusecs. The district administration declared a holiday for schools, anganwadis and PU colleges in Belagavi, Saundatti, Bailhongal, Kittur, Ramdurg, Khanapur, and Hukkeri taluks on Monday and Tuesday.

A high alert has been sounded in Hukkeri taluk, even as authorities urged residents living along the banks of the Ghataprabha and Hiranyakeshi rivers to move to safer areas. The Hidkal reservoir was near its capacity. Amid flood fears, nature's grandeur was on full display as Gokak Falls roared back to life on Monday as inflows into Ghataprabha river increased.

CONTINUED ON P5

Trump floats security guarantee for Ukraine

Signals flexibility on NATO role; Putin briefs Modi on Alaska summit

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

US President Donald Trump on Monday said Washington would ensure any future peace agreement between Ukraine and Russia "works", offering what he described as "very good protection" for Ukraine but left open the question of whether NATO would play a central role.

In a high-stakes Oval Office meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Trump signalled his willingness to support long-term security guarantees. "We'll give them good protection," he said, though when pressed on whether that would resemble NATO's Article 5 collective defence commitment, he replied: "It hasn't been discussed yet."

Zelenskyy, asked what guarantees he needed, replied: "Everything" from equipment to intelligence.

But the most striking development came near the end of the meeting, when Trump announced he would be speaking to Vladimir Putin again soon, following discussions with European leaders also gathered at the White House. The call would mark his second direct engagement with the Russian leader in four days, an indication that Trump is attempting to personally steer negotiations toward a resolution.

"I just met with Zelenskyy, and we covered a lot of territory," Trump said. "I plan to speak with President Putin again later today."

That statement reframed the day's diplomacy. Trump's move to keep direct lines open with Moscow even as European leaders, including UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron, advocate a tougher approach underscores his central role in shaping the next phase of the conflict.

"I don't think you need a ceasefire to end the war," Trump said—a position more closely aligned with Moscow's narrative than Kyiv's.

Earlier in the day, Russian President Vladimir Putin called Prime Minister Narendra Modi to brief him on his recent meeting with US President Donald Trump in Alaska.

Putin's telephone call to Modi—their second call in the past 10 days—came amid mounting pressure from the US over India's continued purchase of Russian oil.

During the call with Modi, Putin shared his take on his meeting with Trump and Modi responded by reaffirming India's position: support for a peaceful resolution to the Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy. P12

ZELENSKYY'S WIFE WRITES TO MELANIA

In a curious development, Zelenskyy delivered a personal letter from his wife Olena to First Lady Melania Trump, thanking her for all the good efforts to help return Ukrainian children taken to Russia

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his cabinet colleagues during the inauguration of the Hebbal Flyover loop in Bengaluru on Monday | EXPRESS

₹80-CRORE HEBBAL FLYOVER LOOP OPENS

The much-awaited 700-metre loop at Hebbal Flyover was inaugurated by Chief Minster Siddaramaiah on Monday. The new ramp, built at a cost of Rs 80 crore, is expected to provide seamless travel for vehicles heading towards Mehkri Circle from KR Puram and Nagawara | P2

Yellow Line cuts traffic congestion on Hosur Road

RAKSHITH GOWDA @Bengaluru

THE opening of Metro Yellow Line has brought relief to commuters on Hosur Road, one of the city's most congested stretches, to some extent. An analysis found that overall traffic congestion dropped by 10% following the Metro line's launch.

According to a study conducted by ASTRAM (Actionable Intelligence for Sustainable Traffic Management) of the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP), traffic congestion on Hosur Road (11.5 km from Central Silk Board to Delta Electronics Bommasandra metro stations) dropped by 10% on August 11, the first day of Yellow line's commercial operations, compared to average Mondays. The most significant relief was during evening peak hours (4 pm–9 pm), with a 32% (21 km from RV Road to Delta Electronics Bommasandra stations) reduction, as many commuters opted for the Metro while returning from work instead of while going to office. Morning traffic (7-11 am) showed a modest 22% drop on August 12.

DCP (Traffic-South) Gopal M Byakod said, "On average, traffic congestion along Yellow Line on Hosur Road has reduced by 10% after the metro began operations." P2

EXPRESS READ

RESERVATION

K'taka Assembly passes Co-op Bill

Bengaluru: In a significant move, the Karnataka Assembly on Monday passed the Karnataka Co-operative Societies (Amendement) Bill, 2025, to provide reservation to SCs, STs and OBCs in the election of presidents and vice-presidents in the cooperative societies. It also proposed the nomination of three members — one each from SC, ST and a woman — to the board of directors. However, they will not be given voting rights in the elections, said Law Minister H K Patil on Monday | P4

SPACE TO PM'S HOUSE

Shukla meets Modi, gifts Axiom patch

New Delhi: Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, who became the first Indian astronaut to travel to the International Space Station, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the latter's Lok Kalyan Marg residence on Monday. Shukla gifted the PM the Axiom-4 mission patch and the Indian Tricolour that he had taken with him to the ISS. The tricolour was fluttering in the background on the ISS when Shukla interacted with Modi on June 29.

SIT won't dig till FSL files report: Dr G

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

HOME Minister Dr Parameshwara said in the Assembly on Monday that there will be no further digging for the remains of bodies allegedly buried in Dharmasthala until the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) files its report on the analyses of the samples recovered from two spots.

The minister clarified that the witness-complainant, who claimed to have buried several bodies at Dharmasthala village, cannot be arrested or detained as per the Witness Protection Act following an order of the district magistrate, whom the whistle-blower had approached. To protect his identity, he has been referred to only as "V" and he will be protected from coming face to face with the accused. The order will be in force for 60 days, he added. The skull that the witness-complainant had brought to the police has also been sent to FSL, he said.

"The skeletons, soil sample, bones, and other material recovered at the two spots have been sent to FSL. The chemical analysis of the samples collected at every spot should be analysed and only then can we say the investigation has started. The SIT has decided to stop the search till FSL analysis report arrives. The DNA of the samples will also be determined," he said. Any material, including bones, get dissolved after some time in the laterite and acidic soil. That is the reason the analysis of the samples is required to decide the next course of investigation, he said.

He clarified that the government has not set a deadline for the SIT, but expects it to complete the probe at the earliest. "I don't understand your (BJP's) intentions. One cannot say whether a mass burial has happened or not. Let's assume that it has not happened, then won't it help Dharmasthala retain its image? If it has happened, won't affected families get justice? Don't politicise. Leave it to the law, let truth come out," he said. P4

DHARMASTHALA CASE

BJP wants action against social activist

BJP MLAs demanded action against social activist Mahesh Shetty Thimarodi, who had reportedly accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of being involved in 28 murders | P4

INDIA bloc Vice-Prez pick to be decided today

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE Opposition INDIA bloc is likely to announce its candidate for the Vice Presidential election on Tuesday afternoon. According to sources, though top leaders of the bloc discussed a few names at a Zoom meeting on Monday, the final call will be taken on Tuesday.

"A meeting of leaders of all Opposition parties in Parliament will be held at 12.30 PM Tuesday Aug 19 at 10, Rajaji Marg," wrote Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on X.

Sources said names that came up in the meeting include former ISRO scientist and Padma Shri awardee M Annadurai and Tushar Gandhi, great grandson of Mahatma Gandhi; and DMK leader M Annadurai. The Opposition's candidate will be vying with NDA pick Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan.

Sources said the Opposition wants to field a non-political face who has national standing and stature senior DMK leaders have proposed the name of M Annadurai, who hails from Tamil Nadu and is well respected, for the vice-president's post.

WANG YI IN INDIA ON TWO-DAY VISIT

The Chinese foreign minister on Monday held talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who called for "a candid and constructive approach" to reset ties. Wang will meet National Security Adviser Ajit Doval on Tuesday

APPLE LEASES 2.7 LAKH SQFT OFFICE SPACE IN BENGALURU

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

TECH giant Apple has leased approximately 2.7 lakh sqft of premium office space in Bengaluru for 10 years, with a total rental outlay of Rs 1,000 crore, one of the city's largest single-tenant commercial deals.

According to Propstack lease documents, Apple will occupy from fifth to 13th floors of Embassy Zenith on Sankey Road, Vasanth Nagar, at a monthly rent of Rs 6.31 crore. A yearly rental increase of 4.5% has been agreed upon.

This is Apple's second office in Bengaluru. In 2021, it had rented 1.16 lakh sqft at Prestige Minsk Square on Cubbon Road, Bengaluru, at a monthly rent of Rs 2.43 crore, with operations commencing in 2023.

Industry analysts estimate that the new office could accommodate over 1,200 employees, spanning a carpet area of 196,179 sqft and a total chargeable area of 268,737 sqft. Apple has placed a security deposit of Rs 31.57 crore and paid Rs 1.5 crore in stamp duty.

The lease officially began on April 3, 2025, and was registered in July 2025. The property is owned by Mac Charles (India) Ltd, an affiliate of the Embassy Group.

Apple is set to open its third retail store in India at the Phoenix Mall of Asia in northern Bengaluru. The company has leased about 8,000 sqft from Sparkle One Mall Developers for 10 years, with an annual rent of Rs 2.09 crore.

Apple is also exploring further expansion within Embassy Zenith. The company has leased over 12,600 sqft at Oberoi Sky City Mall in Borivali, Mumbai, and an additional 8,000 sqft in Byatarayanapura, Bengaluru. Meanwhile, Foxconn—Apple's major manufacturing partner—has begun iPhone 17 production at its new Devanahalli facility near Bengaluru.